



PRESS RELEASE

January 10, 2018

Contact: Paul Feist

Office: 916.327.5353

E-mail: pfeist@cccco.edu

California Community Colleges Committed to Gov. Jerry Brown's Online College to Provide Skills and Training for "Stranded" Working Adults

Sacramento, California – California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley today announced full support for Gov. Jerry Brown's budget proposal to establish a new online community college tailored to provide working learners with skills and credentials they need to move ahead in today's economy.

Oakley and Board of Governors President Cecilia V. Estolano said a broad coalition made up of representatives of organized labor, employer groups, education leaders as well as public policy and social justice organizations already backs the proposal to reach so-called stranded workers who cannot access traditional community college programs.

The college will develop short-term credential programs aimed at serving the approximately 2.5 million adults in California with some or no college experience who do not have time to enroll in a traditional community college. The competency-based online college will help these working learners with flexibility offered through on-demand education and training, enabling them to earn college credentials that lead to higher wages.

"California community colleges are serving 2.1 million students each year, but we are still not meeting the needs of 2.5 million others who for a variety of reasons cannot attend classes on our campuses," said Oakley. "It's our responsibility to bring the campus to them, and we can do that through a fully online college."

Estolano noted that the governor's proposal also aligns with the California Community Colleges' recently adopted [Vision for Success](#) and its goal of better serving working adults looking for non-traditional approaches to boosting their job skills.

"While California's 114 community colleges offer the most economical options for higher education and career training in the country, many working adults are looking for more online opportunities that fit into their schedule," she said.

The new on-line college will not compete for students already being served by community colleges because these working learners cannot and do not access our traditional college programs. This new, competency-based online college will be unlike any other public online education platform and will focus predominately on sub-associate degree credentials tailored to the needs of these working learners.

In May of 2017, Gov. Brown urged Oakley in a letter sent to the Chancellor to “take whatever steps are necessary” to establish a new community college that exclusively offers fully online programs.

Four options were presented to the governor in November, and the proposed state budget includes funding to move forward with design and development of a college under a new college district operated by the state Chancellor’s Office.

The proposal has already garnered support from a wide spectrum of California leaders.

“California must expand access to college to improve the lives of its residents and meet the challenges of the future economy,” Mark Baldassare, President and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California. “The California Community Colleges recognizes the importance of this goal in its proposal to serve students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. In a state known for innovation and world-class higher education, the community college system is ideally situated to pioneer and rigorously evaluate this concept of online education.”

“Online education with high-touch support is the only way to educate the 500,000 healthcare workers needed in the next 10 years,” said Rebecca Miller, workforce director for SEIU United Health Care Workers. “The future of care delivery demands that providers be digitally fluent and adapt quickly to new technologies. On-line education is long overdue for working adults.”

“As the largest system of higher education in the nation, the California Community Colleges is a significant source for higher education and training that is seeding jobs across the state,” said Linda Bidrossian, senior vice president of the Bay Area Council. “However, not all Californians can physically get to a campus or wait until a traditional semester starts. A fully online community college will enable students and workers to develop or upkeep their skills and ensure educators are positioned to meet learners’ needs.”

For a full list of supporters and more information about the online college, go to <http://ccconlinecollege.org>.

####

About California Community Colleges

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 114 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>.